

# INNER PARTY DISCUSSION ISSUE

# SOCIALIST APPEAL

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## CONTENTS

Editorial:	"Appeal" and the Left Wing	13	Resolutions:	Spanish Situation .....	21
Max Shachtman:	Prospects for a Labor Party....	15		People's Front .....	24
Glen Trimble:	Should Socialists Build a Labor Party .....	17	Albert Goldman:	Toward Socialist Clarity .....	26
R. B. Whitten:	National Left Wing Conference	19		Call for Appeal Institute .....	27

## The Appeal and the Left Wing

THE APPEAL, since its foundation, has attempted consistently to carry forward within the Socialist party the tradition of revolutionary Marxism. During these years of transition in our party, the uniform perspective of the APPEAL has been the development of the party into the revolutionary party of the American working class. It has greeted whole-heartedly every step forward along that road, and criticized—as a Marxist journal must—every retreat. It has actively done its own not inconsiderable share in promoting that revolutionary development.

The APPEAL has repeatedly stated that success in the great task ahead requires as a primary condition the creation of a National Left Wing which would gather together all genuine left wingers within the party. Only through such a National Left Wing can the activities of left wingers, now working to a considerable extent as individuals or in informal local groups, be coordinated and consciously directed in such a manner that the best possible results for the party as a whole can be obtained. Such a Left Wing will prove the most efficient, the most democratic, the most rapid method for assuring and completing the revolutionary development of the party as a whole.

The APPEAL never regarded the former Militant grouping as a Left Wing in its own meaning of the term—that is, as a revolutionary Marxist tendency. In the struggle against the Old Guard the Militant group played an unquestionably progressive role; and it would be in a sense correct to say that, prior to the Cleveland Convention, with the then existing relationship of forces, the Militants functioned as the "left wing" of the party. However, the Militant group was in reality an amalgamation of several quite different political currents, temporarily united only in opposition to the extreme and sterile reformism and bureaucratic rule of the Old Guard.

With the departure of the Old Guard, the foundation on which the Militant group was based immediately dropped away. A process of differentiation necessarily set in, separating the right wing Militants, whose political opposition to the Old Guard had never been based on clear and fundamental principles from the left wing Militants. Indeed, this process of differentiation was already apparent at the Cleveland Convention itself, where the strength of the right wing Militants centered especially in the New York delegation.

The right wing Militants moved steadily ahead, and

were indeed the major influence in the public life of the party. Through them (and their dominant motive was of course the retention of the remains of the Old Guard forces), the CALL pursued its reformist policy during the campaign; the miserable showing was made in the struggle with the Old Guard in Pennsylvania and Connecticut; the party failed even to take a position with reference to the French and Spanish events; Wisconsin was allowed without protest to slide into a wholly reformist Peoples' Front conglomeration . . . . It became more and more apparent that the right wing influence centered in New York; and that the local administration under the leadership of Jack Altman was—though for some time in a veiled and hypocritical manner, without showing true political colors—its spearhead. Local New York somehow found itself—as if by accident, few members understanding just why—marching in a Peace Parade under the leadership of the American League Against War and Fascism, slipping into relations with the Stalinist North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, nominating labor bureaucrats for office only to have them repudiate the party . . . . And, likewise almost as if by accident, it gradually became apparent that a systematic campaign of provocation was being carried on against the genuine left, particularly against the members of the former Workers' party. The City Convention during the summer raised eligibility requirements for the City Central Committee from the already extremely bureaucratic two years to three years. No single former Workers party member was permitted to speak for Local New York during the campaign. None was given any post to fill or function to perform, in spite of the long and fruitful experience in the revolutionary movement possessed by many of them. And soon, on the flimsiest of pretexts, various comrades were brought up on charges—for accepting an invitation to speak on the Soviet Trials in New Jersey, for criticizing the policies of the Blum government, for suggesting in inner party circles that a party member was influenced in certain opinions by Stalinism.

During the past two months Altman's hand has been more openly shown. At a party membership meeting on Spain, held in December, he defended politically the People's Front government in Spain. In the current city elections for the City Executive Committee, he joins in organized and open backing of a right wing pro-People's Front slate. It is reported that his group has taken on

definite organizational form. And to make his purpose quite clear, he has brought formal charges against James Burnham for a political criticism which Burnham made at an inner party meeting held under the auspices of the New York Revolutionary Socialist Educational Society.

Meanwhile, what of the left Militants in New York, and their outstanding leaders, comrades Zam and Tyler? Instead of going resolutely forward toward the revolutionary path, and joining in full collaboration with the left wingers in the party outside of New York and the members of the former W. P. newly entering the party, their policy has on the whole been dominated by a desperate effort to maintain the old Militant grouping intact—that is, to avoid antagonizing Altman. In spite of resolutions and motions in small committees, and speeches in small rooms, they have failed to check Altman's course; and in virtually every important incident have given way before him. All this, under the mistaken theory that thereby—by not "antagonizing" anyone—there would be an opportunity to persuade the maximum number to come along with the true Left. The results have been, of course, just the opposite: one after another, in his own way, Altman has been picking off the former Militant leaders—the two Barons, Gross, Siegel, Levenstein . . . and undermining the ranks. By failing to resist Altman, to fight against him openly when necessary, the left Militants merely made it easier for him to pursue his own course and draw together his own forces.

#### *Left Militants Conciliate*

In the formation of the R.S.E.S. Zam begged the ex-WP members to accept a minority position far under the proportion of their real strength, and to have the ex-WP ranks enter only in small groups—again, in order not to "antagonize." The ex-WP members accepted so absurd and politically false a course only because of their anxiety to raise no obstacles against any step looking toward a genuine national left wing formation, and in order to demonstrate to the full their willingness to collaborate without any thought of "prestige." The right wing was less accomodating; it refused, as right wings always do, not to be "antagonized." The Local New York administration replied to the formation of the R.S.E.S.—as was described in the Dec. 15th issue of the APPEAL—by passing a motion designed to make impossible the functioning of any inner party grouping.

All of the efforts at conciliation on the part of the Left Militants in New York led nowhere; led, rather, to losses for the left and gains for the right. And, in the end, during the weeks just past, Altman and his colleagues from the former Militant grouping, have themselves taken the initiative, broken with the Left Militants, and lined up definitely in a right wing formation: making this fully apparent by the charges against Burnham (preferred against the opposition of the Left Militants), by support of the right wing slate in the City Elections as against the slate of the Left Militants, and by the daily clearer emergence of an organized right wing, pro-People's Front tendency.

The break between Altman and the Left Militants is, certainly, all to the good; though the manner in which it has occurred has been far more to the advantage of Altman than to the left wing. But what is the reply of the Left Militants? Their reply, up to the present, has been the refusal to take any steps toward a united left wing; and, on the contrary, the feverish attempt to pull together a grouping which would be "anti-Altman" on the one side, and exclude the APPEAL supporters and ex-WP members on the other. As this issue of the APPEAL goes to press, Zam has called a meeting on the above basis—a meeting, for attendance at which the necessary and sole requirements are a dislike of Altman and non-membership in the former WP.

We must speak frankly: If Zam goes through with the formation of a grouping on this basis, it must be described as a centrist grouping, and an unprincipled grouping as well. Indeed, it amounts to no more than a bargaining counter for garnering Convention delegates. What is or can be the political foundation for a such a group? Some of its proponents try shamefacedly to pretend that it rests on a Labor party position differing from that of the APPEAL. To this three replies can be made: first, the APPEAL has never put forward its Labor party position as a necessary part of the program of the left wing in its initial stages; second, the Labor party question is at present not a live question in the labor movement of this country—there being no prospect in the near future for a national Labor party—and it consequently can in no way serve as sufficient justification for an independent grouping; and third—and most revealing—Zam invited to this Sunday meeting a number of Socialists, not formerly members of the WP, who support the Labor party position of the APPEAL, and oppose his own position.

#### *Role of Centrist Group*

This proposed grouping of Zam's has no real political foundation in the life of the party. Its role cannot possibly be anything other than to attempt to play off the Altman forces against the genuine left wing; to try to hold a "balance of power." And through such maneuvering it must necessarily injure the real interests of the left, and aid the strategy of Altman. It is a concession to the false notion discussed in the APPEAL Platform that the party in its development faces a danger "from the right and from the left." This notion the platform sufficiently disposed of. The whole course of the party since Cleveland proves beyond a shadow of doubt that in becoming the revolutionary party of the American working class, the only serious obstacles are from the right, are in brief from the influence of Peoples' Frontism in the party.

During the past two months the APPEAL supporters, including the Associate Editors who are also Directors of the R.S.E.S. (Shachtman, Draper, Burnham) have, formally and informally, by discussion and correspondence, attempted to work out with the Left Militants a solution for the problem of a genuine united national left wing. The calling of the Special Convention pushed the need for a solution ahead; for, in spite of the serious practical difficulties, the left wing is compelled politically to make coordinated preparation for the Convention. A National Conference was proposed, to which all left wingers would be invited, and at which there could be ironed out the perspective for the left wing in the coming period, the Convention strategy, the question of a national left wing organ; and, if possible, the setting up of a representative national leadership. In December, the left Militants refused this proposal. Many left wingers throughout the country, however, demand it. The APPEAL insists on a gathering—whatever its formal status—which is open to any left winger who wishes to attend. We have nothing whatever to hide; and no fear of placing our views—individual or collective—before any section of the party membership. Zam and Tyler have refused such an open meeting.\*

It was against this background that the Appeal Association of Chicago decided to call an Institute for the week end of February 20-22, a meeting which is open to any and all left wingers in the party. We believe that under the concrete circumstances this is the biggest step forward that can be taken at the present time. It is not our intention to try, by any artificial coup or through any mechanical majority, to turn the Institute into a "national left wing conference." After what has happened,

the problem of the national left wing will have to wait at least until a conference which can be called for the days immediately preceding the Convention.

The APPEAL has not taken and does not take an "ultramistic" attitude toward the national left wing. It has been our belief that a sufficient measure of fundamental political agreement exists among left wingers to make it possible for the left wing to function as a unit, leaving open certain questions for further clarification and future decision. The fundamental agreement that distinguishes left wingers we find on the two great issues now facing the party and the movement: first, a clear, specific position on the Peoples' Front, such as presented in the resolution carried in this issue; second, the clear acceptance of a revolutionary perspective for the development of the party, such as given in the Appeal Platform. If agreement on such a basis is not possible, then this should be openly recognized, and the political motivation for disagreement given. The APPEAL is not prepared, and will not be, to arrange any "deals" or maneuvers which involve the watering down of principle in order to gain some temporary organizational advantage. Such gains, in the long run, always turn out to be losses.

The APPEAL is not interested in questions of "prestige." The Chicago Association has called the Institute independently not in order to "steal a march" on anyone in the party, but because the majority of the Board of Directors of the RSES refused to join in the call. We

wish it understood that the Institute is open to all left wingers in the party; and we urge left wingers to demand that Zam, Tyler, and the other Left Militant leaders attend, and state their case.

The perspective of the APPEAL remains what it has been: to do its part in the great task of making our party the revolutionary party of the American working class. It is this perspective which guides and controls its policy.

\* To complete the record of the negotiations for a national left wing conference it must be stated that a group of left Militants decided to call a left wing conference at Pittsburgh to which conference only thirty to forty leading comrades were to be invited. The supporters of the APPEAL in New York rejected the proposal for a "leadership conference" and insisted upon a general left wing conference. When comrade Goldman was informed by Frank Trager of the "leadership conference" proposal he also rejected it and on his own individual responsibility suggested that sixteen comrades—seven from the left Militants, seven from the former WP and two from the Appeal Association—meet to discuss the problems facing the left wing without assuming any authority to decide on any of the problems. The gathering should be not in the nature of a conference of the left wing but of a consultation exploring the possibilities for a conference. This was acceptable to comrade Trager.

The "Appealites" of New York rejected the idea on the ground that what is needed is not a discussion group but a general conference with moral authority to decide matters. The left Militants at the time of writing have not yet replied. It is clear that no authoritative national left wing conference will meet and consequently the Appeal Association has decided to hold an Appeal Institute.

## Prospects for a Labor Party

BY MAX SHACHTMAN

THOSE WHO look forward to a Labor or Farmer-Labor party development in the United States as the road for the socialist movement, have received three rude blows in almost as many weeks, following the presidential election.

The will-o-the-wisp hunters have concentrated their hopes upon three sources as the springs from which a Labor party movement would gush forth if only the magic wand was applied with sufficient skill and patience. The oldest is the Farmer-Labor party of Minnesota; then, the Labor Non-Partisan League; and finally, its New York branch, the American Labor party. The elections once over, and the task of all of them successfully completed—namely, herding the labor vote into the corral of the Democratic party—they have, one after another, sprayed the yearning hopefulets with a stiff cold douche.

Let us hear first from Minnesota, remembering that this is not the first time it has rejected the often-professed crown of "leadership" in the movement for a national Labor or Farmer-Labor party. A recent Federated Press dispatch, which remained unreproduced in the more vociferous organs of Farmer-Laborism (particularly the C.P. press), reads as follows:

"ST. PAUL (FP)—'Attempting to form a national Farmer-Labor party around the election returns of 1936 is ridiculous,' declares the MINNESOTA UNION ADVOCATE, official organ of St. Paul labor and a mouthpiece for advanced Farmer-Labor opinion. 'Before Minnesota Farmer-Laborites lend their prestige to the formation of a national party they should first demonstrate to the people of this state the worthiness of their party as a state organization (this task still needs accomplishing after more than a decade of party existence!—M.S.). All that has been achieved came through a coalition with liberal Democrats and Liberal Republicans.'

The item, by itself, would suffice to indicate the prospects for Farmer-Laborism in the coming period. The finality with which hopes are dashed means that the Minnesota people are not acting (or rather, failing to act) on their own hook. Beyond any doubt, the con-

fidential conversations that have been going on among our great labor leaders have reached the entirely predictable conclusion concerning the future of a Farmer-Labor party which is voiced in the ADVOCATE editorial.

Confirmation of this is contained in a highly significant article that appears in the December issue of the JEWISH FRONTIER. It is called "Is a Labor Party on the Way?" and it is written by a man who ought to know.—J.B.S. Hardman. Hardman is editor of the official organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, and he ought to know this much: just what his superiors, immediate and remote, are planning. And his superiors include, and collaborate with, the rulers of the destiny of the Labor Non-Partisan League—Sidney Hillman, John L. Lewis, and associates. What Hardman writes is what Hillman and Lewis do not find it convenient or necessary to sign their own names to, but what they are nevertheless not loath to have known. It may safely be assumed that in this article, at least, Hardman is unofficial spokesman for the L.N.P.L. officialdom—which is the same as saying, for the L.N.P.L. itself.

"By putting wishful thinking to work," begins Hardman, "it should be easy to draw a cheerful picture of a labor party rising in the near future, in consequence of the part played by labor in the national election." (But Hardman is no wishful-thinker, and he sets right those who are.)

"Labor didn't enter the campaign for independent political action, but to mobilize labor strength in support of the President. The move had one central political intention: to prepare the justification for a claim of reward, in the form of favorable labor protective legislation, in the eventuality of success. The L.N.P.L. was not intended to be the framework of a labor party. Its essence was and remains—organized labor pressure, during nominations, elections, and in the course of legislative activity, for political support of labor demands. Labor progressives, and this goes for the spokesmen of the Committee for Industrial Organization, view the matter of forming a labor party pragmatically: will it, or will it not, serve the objectives of labor organizations?.... The unqualified, self-denying support given by labor to

the President has made the probability of an independent labor party emerging in the near future problematical, to say the least."

The third blow to Labor partyism is dealt by the private-owned American Labor party of New York. At a recent meeting, it adopted a resolution which forbids the affiliation of other political parties. The decision is of considerable significance. It is aimed primarily not at the Communist party—which has exerted itself so magnificently to prove that it is as conservative and as little to be feared as the A.L.P. bureaucracy itself—but at the Socialist party. The mechanical-minded non-Marxists, who have analyzed the Labor party problem in the United States by abstract analogy and not by an examination of the concrete and specific conditions of time and place, take it for granted that the "coming" Labor party in the United States will, like the British Labor party, not be a direct competitive body, with individual membership branches, but a loose, inclusive, **federated** party, within which the Socialist party could function freely as the educative Left wing leaven. With these good intentions, they have conceived the role of the S.P. in the Labor party as a Left wing combatting reformism and class collaboration, unlike the C.P. role, which is that of a Left wing supporting reformism and class collaboration.

The A.L.P. decision, however, precluded the playing of such a role. In effect, it is an ultimatum to the S.P.. If you want to play "Labor party politics" with us, you can do so only on condition that you dissolve your party and enter our party on our terms, namely, join as individuals, without an independent program or conception, uncritically, and with the pledge of acquiescence in whatever the private proprietors of our party propose.

How gray and unreal do the Labor party "theories," which some people suck out of their thumbs, appear when confronted with the cold reality of the nearest thing to a Labor party that has thus far materialized! Those who now advocate that our party members should join the ALP as individuals, are offering us the alluring prospect of dissolving the Socialist party and making its individual constituent parts election trumpeters in 1937 for demagogue LaGuardia for Mayor in the same way that the individual constituent parts of the Stalinist party, which entered the ALP in 1936, became election agents for demagogue Roosevelt for President.

\* \* \*

The last refuge of the Farmer-Laborite, harrassed by stubborn reality, is the pseudo-Marxian argument: Admitted that the labor officials are reluctant to form a Labor party, isn't it our task as active revolutionists to carry on a vigorous campaign in labor's ranks in order to mobilize enough strength to force the unions and their officials to organize a Labor party?

Our task is nothing of the kind! Not only is there every reason to believe that if and when a Labor "party" is formed it will be done only to corral working class votes for a bourgeois party or candidate and to head off the growth of the revolutionary Socialist party (what else was the ALP formed for in New York?), but there is no reason why our party should take the responsibility for initiating, advocating and launching a reformist party, especially one which, under the circumstances, will be a party of individual membership as well.

It is interesting to note that the Socialist party concerned itself greatly with the Labor party question even before the war—in 1909. Although the question of the S.P.'s attitude towards a Labor party was more abstract then than it is today—there was even less of a movement for it at that time than now—it is a fact that the period in which we lived three decades ago, offered more objective arguments for a Labor party than are present today.

### Hillquit on Labor Party

The editors of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW of that period circularized the candidates for the National Executive Committee of the party with the question whether or not they favored the merging of the S.P. with a Labor party. It is highly interesting to record the fact that, whatever the replies were, not one responsible comrade advocated that the S.P. or its members should help initiate a non-socialist, i.e., a reform party. The militant spirit in the party made such a position untenable. In fact, the only point of disagreement revolved around this question: If a Labor party should be formed by **other forces** (and not by us!) what should be the attitude of our **Socialist** party toward it? And this was and remains the only way the question of a Labor party can and should be posed by Marxists.

For obvious reasons, the reply of Morris Hillquit to the circular question is of special interest. I give it in full:

"Your question is purely academic. We have no Labor party in this country, and, as far as I know, there are no present indications of a movement to create one. Should our trade unions, contrary to general expectations, constitute themselves into a political party within the near future, the Socialist party will have to determine its attitude towards it in national convention or by referendum vote. The incoming National Executive Committee will have no power to formulate the policy of the party, and it matters little whether the members of the committee as such 'favor' or 'oppose' a merger of the Socialist party with a hypothetical Labor party.

"My personal views on the general question are, briefly stated, as follows: The main object of the Socialist party is to organize the workingmen of this country into a class conscious, independent political party. If our movement is to succeed at all, this object must be accomplished, and I am not worrying very much about the manner and form of the accomplishment. It would, of course, be preferable to organize the working class of America within the Socialist party: this would ensure permanent soundness and clearness of the movement. If, however, the organized workers of the country, independent of our desires and theories, should form a party of their own, a bona-fide and uncompromising working class political party on a national scale, I believe the logical thing for our party to do, would be to cooperate with such a party. I would not favor a complete merger in any case, because as long as the assumed Labor party would not be thoroughly socialistic, our party would still have an important mission to perform, even more so than now. On the other hand, if such Labor party should proceed on the theory of class harmony, enter into alliances with middle-class reform movements, and be reactionary in its general character, I would consider it very unwise on the part of our party to abandon or even to modify our policy of independent socialist politics. But all this is today mere speculation. What confronts us today is not a political Labor party, but a mass of workingmen, organized and unorganized, supporting the capitalist parties, and, whatever the future may hold in store for us, our present duty is to wean these workers from the politics of their masters, to instill in them a spirit of class consciousness and an appreciation of the socialist philosophy. This work should be done with far greater intensity, regularity and planfulness than heretofore, and this policy I will favor, if re-elected as a member of the National Executive Committee" (INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. X, No. 7, Jan. 1910, pp. 601f My emphasis, M. S.).

Whatever may be said about the defects in Hillquit's Marxism—and they were neither few nor unimportant—his 1909 statement on the question of a Labor party is essentially sound, even exemplary, today. The party—to say nothing of the revolutionary Marxists within it—could do worse than adopt the Hillquit position of 1909 as its own. Its correctness has been confirmed by events; in its turn it confirms our view that the arguments of the consistent Left wingers in the party are not a product of "sectarianism," but are entirely in accord with the best traditions of revolutionary Marxism in the movement.

# Should Socialists Build a Farmer-Labor Party?

BY GLEN TRIMBLE

THIS ARTICLE is written, in part, as a case study of developing opinion on the question of a Labor or Farmer-Labor party. I have been, and still am, extremely interested in the question having served on the 1934-35 sub-committee of the National Executive Committee which was to "survey the possibilities for a Farmer-Labor party in the United States," and having reported and argued for the majority resolution passed at the Cleveland Convention.

Since then events have served to shake my convictions but, up to the present, I have not joined in the discussion carried on in the pages of the APPEAL because, frankly, I had not made up my mind.

My interest in the Farmer-Labor party question, prior to Cleveland, arose out of a strong feeling that the general attitude of the party membership was one of contented isolation from the labor movement and from the broad problems of the working class. They just didn't want to be disturbed in their little round of meetings and self-congratulation on being brighter than other people. As a consequence, when any sort of phoney move like Epic or even the Coughlin and Townsend affairs came along, whole sections of our membership decided that the Farmer-Labor party had come in all its glory and went over to it without a struggle. The general party policy was one of ignoring the problem and the membership was thoroughly unprepared to deal with it when it became an immediate issue. Therefore I felt that to overcome isolation and to give at least some basis for action in relation to moves for mass working class political action we should face the question squarely and, above all, lay down definite conditions which would define the minimum basis for "genuineness" in a Labor or Farmer-Labor party.

### *Effect of Cleveland Resolution*

As a matter of fact, the actual conditions of the Cleveland Resolution would brand every existing setup as ineligible for our support. Certainly the action of the NEC in sanctioning the alliance of the Wisconsin party with the Wisconsin Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation is in direct conflict with the instructions of the Convention.

This is but one of a number of instances which have made it obvious that the effect of the resolution on the party membership has been very different from that which we who supported it had hoped. Generally, the conditions have been ignored and the resolution taken as a blanket endorsement of any and every sort of Farmer-Labor party, local or national.

Moreover a tendency already present before Cleveland among a large section of party members seems to have been accentuated by the Convention action. Many of our people have come to regard the Farmer-Labor party as an infinitely more desirable ALTERNATIVE to the Socialist party. They look forward to the day when they will belong to what they think of as a real movement and are in the meantime restless and inactive in the Socialist party. The fact that this attitude exists is a severe criticism of the training and education in the party in the recent past.

To bring out this same point from another angle, take the contrast between Socialist activity in the trade union movement before the war and at present. From what I have read, Socialists in local and national trade unions and at every annual Convention of the A.F. of L.

made major fights on straight socialist resolutions, that is on resolutions calling for the socialization of industry and direct endorsement of the Socialist party program and candidates. So far as I know no such resolutions have been introduced in recent conventions of the A.F. of L. Instead our people have fought for a Labor-party resolution as the solution for labor's political problems. There can only be one conclusion from this. We have lost confidence and trust in our own organization, or at least trust in its appeal to the trade unions. Certainly this is an unhealthy attitude. If we are right the Socialist party comes first, any sort of secondary mass organization afterwards.

Just as at Cleveland I felt that our contented isolation required an emphasis on our relations to the mass organizations and the workers, I now feel that we must emphasize above all the absolute necessity of no compromise of our own organization or its principles in those relations.

### *Labor Party in California*

I think too that we must recognize that the practical perspectives for a mass Labor party are much less favorable than they were last May.

Perhaps it is best to begin with the California situation. There is no Farmer-Labor party in existence in this state. The Communists are, of course, for one and have called all sorts of conferences, which because of their strength in the State, have made quite a bit of noise. I attended the more important of them as an official observer and none has had any real backing from either labor or farmers. Another group interested, but somewhat dampened by the Communist ardor, is the Progressive party group, affiliated with Douglas's Commonwealth Federation in representing the best elements left over from Epic. They are however equally without labor or farm influence. The Social Democratic Federation would like to form another American Labor party here but it, too, is isolated. There has been some rumor of action from within the State Federation of Labor but, in my opinion, it will be a long time before anything actually happens.

There was no Farmer-Labor party candidate in the field in 1936. I think that there is definitely less sentiment in California labor and farm ranks for such a party than there was a year or two years ago. There are three clear reasons for this. One is that the Roosevelt-is-our-salvation campaign has had its effect. Second is that the C.P. while successful in roping in a lot of liberals, has scared off or soured most of the genuine progressives in the labor and farm workers movements. Third the complete failure and collapse of Epic has shattered the illusions of many previous supporters of the "revolution by the back door."

The attitude of our own party membership has been influenced tremendously by these events and, also, by contact with recruits from the Workers party. At present the majority is probably opposed to taking the lead in, or assisting in the formation of, a national labor or farmer-labor party. They are certainly opposed to any state adventure.

All the news we have received from the West and mid-West has indicated a swing similar to that in California. I sincerely believe that this swing is less a consequence of the activities of the former members of the WP than it is of conclusions drawn from the actual experience of the campaign. The use of the CIO and the American Labor party as Farley stooges, the Minnesota experience

and, particularly out here, what has happened in Wisconsin have made even the most ardent Farmer-Laborites pull up and take stock.

In Wisconsin so far as we can learn we lost a weekly paper, a large number of members, considerable morale among the members who remained, the chance of electing Congressmen under the party name, and, above all, the respect that we did have among the mass organizations in Wisconsin because our program stood out from all the rest. In return what did we gain? We did not even gain votes for municipal and congressional candidates. The attracting power of the progressive label for our own candidates seems to have been actually less than that of the Socialist party. You don't have to be a Trotskyist to wonder what the point of all that is.

More, I'm beginning to seriously doubt the possibility of a program mid-way between what the New Deal, whether or not Roosevelt is its candidate, has to offer and the straight Socialist program. The New Deal politicians have proven themselves quite clever enough to rope in the liberals and the labor skates. I see no particular reason why they cannot continue to do so. What is there less than a straight Socialist conviction which can expose the New Deal for what it is, a very clever bulwark for capitalism? If there is nothing, then trying to conjure up a less than Socialist Farmer-Labor party is chasing rainbows.

#### *Argument for Labor Party*

However, supposing that, even in this late stage of the decline of capitalism, there is a possibility of an independent non-socialist mass working class political organization from which we could not afford to be isolated, we must ask ourselves just what our work would be.

The argument for helping to organize the Farmer-Labor party is very familiar to me because it was my own up till a few months ago, but just in case I may be a little rusty let me quote it as quite ably put in a personal letter from Alfred Baker Lewis, State Secretary of Massachusetts:

"If we are clear that we must be in such a party when and if one is formed, I think it is plain that the party will be less unsatisfactory from our point of view if we will take the initiative among those actively working to have it launched. Any such party, to be worth while, must be based on and controlled by the unions and cut loose from the old parties. Preferably, it should be a federated party but it is unlikely that we will be able to get that, and if the party meets the other two conditions, I think that we should accept individual membership in it. We may lose some of the more weak-kneed Socialists as is the case now in Wisconsin, but the members we will have left will be those who are more than ever able to carry on work for the fundamental principles of Socialism, and more controlled by organized labor or a substantial section of it, it seems that the fight for Socialism is then carried on within working class organization, and if we have any confidence in our principles we can expect much more rapid progress.

"The only difficulty about your position is that if we take a very grudging attitude towards a Labor party or Farmer Labor party and do not work actively for forming it, in the sense of propagandizing for the idea within the ranks of organized labor, we are almost certain to have forced on us a more unsatisfactory party than would otherwise be the case, or even a party which would not want us at all. Between Catholic trade unionists who are otherwise militant in straight trade union action and labor bureaucrats, we might get people starting a Farmer Labor party who would then say 'Hell, we got a party without the Socialists, and why should we let them in,' especially now that our vote has declined."

This argument brings out a point which should be noted before proceeding further. The majority of the party which is broadly termed "the left-wing" differs, of course, in clarity; but it has only one vital difference on the fundamentals of this question. We are generally agreed that we cannot be isolated from the genuinely mass labor political party, that such a party in a pre-revolutionary

situation will be essentially reformist, and that the Socialist party must therefore maintain its organizational independence in order to present the strongest possible opposition based upon the full revolutionary socialist position. Our vital difference is on immediate tactics. Should we assist or oppose the formation of national and local labor parties? It is on this question that I reverse my previous position. The essentials for the argument for assisting formation have been given. Let me number my present objections to it. 1. It is not crystal clear that we must be in such a party when and if one is formed. If the party gives no opportunity for maintaining and propagandizing for our own position we should not be in it. To accept Lewis's premise is to accept the position that we would be willing to sacrifice our program for contact with the masses. Contact without program has no value or meaning except in the negative sense. We would be vastly more "isolated" with our hands and tongues tied as the price of admission to a Farmer-Labor party than we are at present or would be outside of it altogether. (The apparent trend of the American Labor party makes this consideration a concrete and immediate one).

#### *Will Labor Party Admit Us?*

2. The second and most naive of the assumptions is that our position in the Labor party would be determined by the gratitude of labor leaders for our work in assisting its formation. Active Socialists, Norman Thomas above all, can testify to how little gratitude for services in strikes and organization campaigns means. How many votes from labor leaders did we get on this basis in the last campaign? How many times have we seen Socialists who nursed unions from their birth to an established position thrown out on their ears because they were not sufficiently "respectable"? If we have learned anything, we should have learned that the labor leaders do not pay off on gratitude.

3. Our admission and the length of our stay in the Labor party will be determined by one thing and one thing only. That is the extent of our actual rank and file support in the trade unions themselves. That in turn depends on winning Socialists, not just Farmer-Labor partyites, in the unions **now**. We win Socialists in the unions by working for Socialism and the Socialist party, not by soft-pedaling these things for a "half-way" Farmer-Labor party.

4. The Lewis argument glides over a very tough problem. The reason we want to be in a Farmer-Labor party is to gain a wider working class forum for Socialism. This of course means that we will be the opposition not the leadership in the FLP until we reach the revolutionary crisis. Yet we are to take the leadership in organizing a party in which we will be the opposition. Just how, when and on what excuse do we make the transition? The more I think about this question, the more convinced I am that this course of action is impossible. Essentially it means that right now when all our efforts should be directed toward digging our roots deep into the labor movement so that, come what may, we cannot be isolated from it, we should declare a moratorium on campaigning for Socialism and the Socialist party, and take the lead in organizing another party which we ourselves concede will have a different and less adequate program. It just doesn't make sense.

Even if a few of the more subtle of us can find some complicated way of resolving this contradiction to our satisfaction (I, for one, no longer can), it seems to me quite clear that we can never convince or take along the bulk of our own party members on the devious route that would lie ahead. Nor could we justify it to the average trade union member later on.

Therefore our program comes down to this: re-

establishing the old confidence and aggressiveness of the Socialist party itself; driving forward on the campaign to dig into every important section in the labor movement; insisting that our trade union members fight openly first, last and all the time for the full Socialist program and for direct support of the Socialist party.

Attack or support of the Labor party idea has nothing to do with our admission so far as the labor leaders who may form it are concerned. Unless we throw away or declare a moratorium on revolutionary Socialism, they will do everything possible to oppose our admission in any case. On the other hand, the choice between attack and support makes a vast difference in our future relations with the masses who alone can make a revolution. Attack is based on the sure knowledge that a non-Socialist organization and program cannot solve any of their fundamental problems—exploitation, insecurity, war or fascism. Support will be based on—what? A program of opposition to the formation of any political parties short of the Socialist party is realism, not sectarianism. In fact, in view of the fog generated by the Stalinists, an old truth should be re-emphasized. Sectarianism does not consist in insistence on a correct program for the conquest of power; that is the essence of revolutionary socialism as opposed to reformism. Sectarianism consists in failing to carry the logic of a correct program into every immediate struggle of the workers.

It is, then, the proponents, not the opponents, of helping to build a Farmer-Labor party who are essentially sectarian. Their program begins in contact with the masses by catering to their illusions and ends with isolation consequent upon the shattering of those illusions.

If we maintain a clear Marxian position and at the same time build, educate, work and fight side by side with the workers in each and every phase of the class struggle we will have no reason to worry about the charge of sectarianism or to fear isolation from the masses.

Any attempt to build a backfire to our progress in the form of a reformist Farmer-Labor party would be offset by the fact that our roots are in the solid earth of the

mass organizations of the working class. We can force our admission into any such organization and compel its leaders to respect our programmatic independence. Only as we are able to force and compel can we deal with reformism without compromise.

Above all, this course means that we can face the eventuality of a mass labor party with clean hands and free hands. The issue between the inevitably reformist leadership and revolutionary Socialists will be clear and unmistakable from the start. Then our own "genuineness" will decide whether the labor bureaucrats or we will win the day, whether the Farmer-Labor party will be reformist and counter-revolutionary or an effective mass supplement to the revolutionary socialist vanguard when the crisis comes.

Finally, as one of the authors of the Cleveland resolution on the Farmer-Labor party, I must take issue with the position expressed by Comrade Goldman in his column "Toward Socialist Clarity" in the December Appeal. "The duty of revolutionary socialists" will be far more than merely making "a serious effort to balk all attempts to dissipate our energies in the creation of local Farmer-Labor parties" and seeing to it "that the special convention will make the necessary changes to enable the party to develop farther on the road of revolutionary Marxism."

The duty of revolutionary Socialists is to present a full revolutionary Socialist position on the Farmer-Labor party question and on all other fundamental questions now pressing for solution. Compromise is no healthier in the Socialist party than in a Farmer-Labor party. Many of us who have been delegates to the last three Conventions are fed up to the ears with compromise.

The six year excuse for compromise—that the party would be split—has ended with a split despite the fact that the left-wing played at everything and anything but being left. There is no justifiable excuse for continuing that game.

Let's buckle down to choosing delegates who will make decisions and select leadership on the basis of a full, uncompromising, revolutionary Socialist program.

## The Burning Need-A National Left Wing Conference

BY RICHARD BABB WHITTEN

THE ADOPTION of the new Declaration of Principles at the Detroit convention in 1934 marked a milestone in the post-war development of our party. The initial blast was fired then, albeit weakly, at reformist socialism in the American section of the Labor and Socialist International. This was a result, mainly, of our reactions to the crushing defeat of the German movement, with Austrian defeat coming close behind, emphasizing the lesson—reactions made against the background of the world capitalist crisis and its profound manifestation in the United States. Other parties affiliated with the Labor and Socialist International, for the same reasons, experienced the development of left wing currents of varying degrees of clarity. In Spain, the strong left wing of the Socialist party unfortunately failed to complete its revolutionary development before it was thrown into the struggle of 1934 and the present civil war with fascism.

The new Declaration of Principles was carried over the bitter opposition of the Old Guard, the dregs of reformism, which defended the policies that led to the defeat of the social democracy in Germany and Austria. Following these defeats, they attempted to rationalize them. Since political parties of the proletariat move on their

principles, it was natural that the Old Guard fought the new principles and their supporters. Throughout the two years following the Detroit convention, the inter-party struggle grew in intensity. The Militants were formed and led the fight against the Old Guard. Although their highest theoretical development was reached in the Boundbrook program, yet, in practise it was not used to attack consistently the political position of the Old Guard. The Militants showed, by the primarily organizational nature of the fight they waged, the weakness of their position theoretically. It became, so far as most of them behaved, a fight of activism versus passivism and not revolutionary principles versus reformist principles.

At the Cleveland convention the Old Guard withdrew from the Socialist party, failing to get seated. They had their theoretical "say," but received no principled answer. The Cleveland convention, after which the Militants took the leadership of the party, did not answer the pressing problems that faced the party and the world movement. This failure accounts for the weakness of the party's activity since Cleveland, which closed the first chapter in the struggle to create a party of revolutionary socialism.

Today the party stands half-reformist and half-revolutionary with all the weaknesses that such condition im-

poses. The entrance of the former members of the Workers' party, together with the departure of the Old Guard, has created an entirely new situation within the ideological and political life of the party. Burning events in the world struggle have moved forward so rapidly, that former Militants have been forced to take political positions, some to the right, some to the left. Others indulge in the well-known political game of dodging.

This new state of affairs, both within the party and the world struggle, requires a national left wing conference at which a national left wing tendency may be formed upon a revolutionary program. This is the vital need in the Socialist party today, if revolutionary potentialities of the party are to be realized. And, among the parties of the proletariat in the United States, it alone has such potentialities.

### *Boundbrook Program Outlived*

It is necessary that the program of the national left wing conference deal concretely with the most important issues confronting the world labor movement, approaching them, quite naturally, from a revolutionary point-of-view. It is improper, as some hold, that the national left wing conference base itself upon the Boundbrook program. At the Cleveland convention, the overwhelming majority of the Militants, voted against the amendment to the national election platform on the question of the road to power. The amendment contained on this important point the basic principles of the Boundbrook program. Yet, objections of Militants to the amendment on grounds of differences as to the character of an electoral platform to the contrary notwithstanding, the important thing to the Militants was really their deal with the Wisconsin Socialists, not their own principles. This one instance from many holds a lesson for those who wish to approach the question of a national left wing program abstractly. The task of building a revolutionary Socialist party puts foremost the question of educating the membership in revolutionary principles. This can be done, in a sure and correct way, only by answering the vital issues that confront the movement today from the standpoint of basic revolutionary principles. This is not only the Marxist way, it is the tested experience of elementary pedagogy.

The national left wing conference should be called by the existing left wing groups in the party today, of which the most important are the supporters throughout the country of the SOCIALIST APPEAL and the Revolutionary Socialist Educational Society of New York City. Since these groups recognize the necessity of a national left wing conference, a clear agreement on the principled basis for the left wing in the coming period should be the main aim, and an effort should be made by these groups to reach such an agreement as soon as possible. When such an agreement is reached, the national left wing conference should be called for the week-end of February 20th. This would enable more left wingers to attend and, more important, give a month prior to the national convention during which the results of the conference could be discussed and support gained for its program preparatory for the convention. All things considered, Chicago is the most advantageous city in which to hold the national left wing conference, being centrally located and with greater availability of housing.

Some comrades have proposed regional left wing conferences rather than a national one. It is obvious that such regional conferences would be prone to discuss purely regional and organizational problems, when what we need is a conference of the left wing national in scope and hindered by no narrowing regional and organizational matters in its consideration of the principles that must guide the Socialist party. Other left wing comrades do not see the necessity of holding the national left wing

conference until a few days before the national convention in Chicago, which begins March 30th. This, too, is not desirable; first, because it would cause the national left wing conference to lose much of the necessary value it must, and can, have in the political education of the party's membership to a revolutionary socialist position; and second, it is most difficult to discuss adequately, as they demand, the principles of revolutionary socialism for which the party must be won, immediately preceding the opening of a national convention. Under such circumstances, again, matters of organization and personnel intrude.

### *Raising Revolutionary Level*

For left wingers to continue the past haphazard treatment that principles have received in the party is to cast suspicion on our revolutionary understanding or integrity, and for a certainty it will keep us from our goal, a revolutionary Socialist party. The truth is that there is no more effective way to do the supreme task of raising the ideology and politics of the party's membership to a revolutionary level, at present, than through a national left wing conference. It will arouse the attention, interest and support of those principles we hold dear; it will enable us better to win the membership to them. If our task is to build a revolutionary Socialist party, then it can be done only by winning a majority of the membership to revolutionary principles. It is necessary to warn, here, against any comrades who count on taking over the party's leadership and apparatus without the political support of the majority of the party's membership. Such things are possible, but it would be a dangerous game to play with the principles of revolutionary Socialism, aye, a violation of them. It would greatly narrow the possibilities of the Socialist party's becoming the instrument of the American working class for the principles of revolutionary Socialism, which alone lead to proletarian victory.

Immediately, all left wing Socialists throughout the country should agitate for this proposed national left wing conference. Once it has been called it is their duty to raise the question in those locals and branches where the left wing holds a majority and get a representative sent. Naturally, this does not mean that the national left wing conference will have an official standing. In other locals and branches it will be necessary for the left wingers to get together and send a representative. Lone left wingers throughout the country should surely make every effort to attend, for to no little degree their failure to get local left wing support lies in the fact that there is now no national left wing program upon which to rally support. Should it be impossible to send a representative to the conference, then left wing groups should immediately begin to prepare documents which set forth fully the positions they feel the national left wing conference should take. Any suggestions or reports are not excluded, for all relevant material to a national left wing is most important. In this way the national left wing conference will be as representative of the revolutionary Socialists as is possible. Every point-of-view of the left wing must be given a democratic hearing.

Although every left wing comrade worthy of the name recognizes that the whole situation within the party demands a national left wing conference in February, it may turn out that, however necessary, it is physically impossible to hold such a conference. This would be a sharp commentary on our revolutionary maturity, but nonetheless such a sad eventuality must be prepared for now, no matter how irritating. In this unfortunate case, it would be incumbent upon the existing left wing groups to hold jointly an informal conference of their most representative members, where they could work out a basis of agreement for a principled program for the national left wing. Of course, this would not be the pro-

gram of the national left wing, but it could be the basis of a conference of the national left wing just prior to the convention. As many left wingers as are able, should attend the informal conference and participate in its discussions. The resulting program of the informal meeting should then be given the widest discussion in the party, the left wing securing the support of the membership and doing all they can to make it the basis upon which to elect delegates to the national convention. Where delegates have already been elected they should be won to it.

Once the informal conference has agreed upon a program, it should then issue a call for the national left wing conference to be held in Chicago several days prior to the opening of the national convention. This would be the only thing possible to do if every effort to call a national left wing conference in February failed, but it must be recognized that this is not what is politically necessary and would therefore only be the poor second choice. What is needed is a national left wing conference in February!

One last word. It will be difficult in either case for the comrades to come long distances and to raise the necessary money. Every possible means must be exhausted in order to be represented. Social functions, lectures, collections, loans, contributions, and anything

else your ingenuity can devise should be used to finance representation. Digging into personal reserves will be necessary. Freight trains, hitch-hiking, transportation in exchange for driving, renting and borrowing of cars by joint defrayment of expenses by several comrades are possibilities. This should be as nothing compared to the exigencies of the movement to-morrow. But today is today, and correctly understood, the national left wing conference will be more important for to-morrow than the national convention. What the convention will accomplish, in terms of revolutionary socialism, depends upon a national left wing conference prior to the convention. There is no way to build effectively a national left wing without a national left wing conference. This makes it, clearly, a matter of duty to all those whose life is devoted to the emancipation of the working class, those who know that to do this monumental historic task requires a revolutionary Socialist party.

NOTE: Unfortunately comrade Whitten's suggestion for a national left wing conference could not be realized. And his idea of an informal gathering of left wing representatives also struck a snag. Not as a substitute for a national left wing conference but as a step towards the formation of a national left wing and to assure complete cooperation at the party convention, between all genuine left wing tendencies the Appeal Association decided to conduct an Institute where the problems of the left wing and the party will be discussed.

## Draft Resolution on the Spanish Situation

NOTE: The following resolution was approved by the City Executive Committee of the New York Y.P.S.L. for discussion prior to the Yipsel city convention. It is the best resolution thus far formulated and we print it for discussion and adoption by the membership of the Socialist party.

THE SPANISH workers are writing vivid new pages in the history of the international working class. The overthrow of Alfonso in 1931, the insurrection and the Asturias Commune of 1934, the great strikes and street demonstrations of February 1936, and now, the great struggle against the fascist uprising—all these world-shaking events demonstrate once again what deep resources of devotion, self-sacrifice, and heroism are stored in the reservoirs of the proletarian revolutionary movement.

Now our heroic Spanish comrades are engaged in the battle whose outcome will be a decisive factor in deciding the fate of international socialism for years to come. A victory for the Spanish workers will give a tremendous impetus to the second great world revolutionary wave—an upsurge which can accomplish the overthrow of world capitalism. A defeat for the Spanish workers will help the onslaught of world reaction and will check accordingly the prospects of a Socialist France, England and America. Therefore, in our own interests we stand firmly in support of this struggle and will render it every service within our power.

From the very first moment of the fascist revolt in July, the militant workers of Spain moved rapidly along the path of revolutionary struggle. Without waiting for action by their "own" People's Front government, they seized arms, set up their own committees which took over control of production and organized the anti-fascist struggle. The old bourgeois state machinery was revealed as impotent; the old police force, shattered. The dual power of workers' committees, organized parallel to the existing "legal" state, was the **de facto** ruler of "Republican" Spain.

And yet, in spite of the enormous independent power of the workers, in spite of their ability and desire to fight against fascism for proletarian power, the fascists today control half of Spain. They pound at the walls of Madrid. They slaughter thousands upon thousands of courageous workers in a long and bitter civil war.

Why? It is the duty of Socialists everywhere to explain to the workers that the successes of the fascist uprising are the rotten fruits reaped by the policy of reformist and Stalinist compromise with the class enemies of the workers. Every heap of workers' corpses testifies to the truth that the road of reformism is the road of death and defeat for the workers.

### II.

The policies of reformism outside of Spain have in effect meant the betrayal of the interests of the Spanish workers.

From the very first day of the fascist uprising, arms, munitions, technicians, every material aid—poured into reactionary-fascist bands from their brothers in Italy, Germany, and Portugal, the vassal of British imperialism.

At the same time, in the name of "neutrality," parties which claim to represent the interests of the working class surrounded the Spanish proletariat with an iron blockade through which no matiars of war could pass.

The Blum government which is chained to the bourgeoisie through the People's Front, initiated the blockade. The C.P. of France raises the slogan of Arms to Spain but instead of using its mass influence to mobilize the workers in sending arms across the border in spite of government prohibition, merely assigns them the task of "mass pressuring" the government into lifting the arms embargo and materially aiding Spain, thus sowing the fatal illusion that bourgeois government may be depended upon to fight fascism. When the question of neutrality came up in the French Chamber of Deputies, the C.P. did not carry through its opposition but rather abstained on the vote; and even this abstention is negated by its con-

tinued support of the Blum government. It bears equal responsibility for the blockade.

After four months of strict adherence to the neutrality agreement, the belated response of the Soviet Union to the call of the Spanish workers for arms is another demonstration that the actions of the Soviet Union are motivated not by the needs of the international proletariat, but by the necessities of its national foreign policy.

The Labor and Socialist International and its major national sections remain hopelessly bound up with the governments of the democratic capitalist nations. The L.S.I. offers a pious criticism of the neutrality blockade. Instead of appealing for independent mass action by the workers to break the blockade and send arms to the Spanish proletariat, it confines itself to calling for pressure upon liberal bourgeois governments to lift the embargo.

With these parties, we take sharp issue. Rather we join in solidarity with the revolutionary socialists of all countries and especially of France, who, in spite of their governments, call for independent organization by workers' groups for the sending of arms to their comrades in Spain.

From bourgeois governments we expect nothing in support of the Spanish workers. We demand only that they not prevent our own independent action. We appeal to the workers of the world. **Break the neutrality blockade! Arms to the Spanish workers!**

### III.

The policies of reformism inside of Spain have likewise had as their effect the betrayal of the interests of the Spanish workers.

The workers' parties inside of Spain, in the name of a fight for democracy against fascism, have led the workers into a People's Front—an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie.

But the liberal bourgeoisie in Spain is not progressive, it is reactionary. It is incapable of even carrying through its own bourgeois democratic revolution. Confiscation of the landed estates, real destruction of the power of the Church, ousting of the reactionary officers' corps, the development of Spanish industry—these, the traditional accomplishments of the bourgeois democratic revolution, mean at the present stage of development of capitalism, an attack on the very basis of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie will and can do nothing to carry them out.

Against the background of the decline of world capitalism as a whole, there is no firm basis for bourgeois democracy in Spain today. The whole history of the six years of the Republic has been a story of bitter civil war, open and concealed, a struggle between extreme reaction and the proletariat. In its very infancy, Spanish capitalism betrays all the characteristics of senility. There is but one consistent force for progress in Spain—the grave-digger of capitalism, the proletariat. Only a proletarian revolution can solve the problems of the Spanish people. Capitalism and reaction on the one hand—Socialism and progress on the other. These are the alternatives posed before the Spanish masses.

The liberal bourgeoisie serves but one prime function. It shields the growth of fascism.

In the face of the great mass strikes and demonstrations and the forcible freeing of class-war prisoners in February 1936, the bourgeoisie of every stripe recoiled in horror. To stem this tide, to divert the proletarian stream into peaceful channels, to demoralize and disillusion the workers—these were the tasks of the liberal face of capitalist reaction. The instrument for this was the People's Front.

By the use of democratic phrases, by entering into paper alliances with the workers' parties in the People's Front,

by promising everything and doing nothing to prevent fascism, these liberal democrats built a mighty bulwark upon which the February proletarian wave was broken, and behind which, protected from the workers, reaction prepared its uprising.

But without the moral prestige and support received from the workers' parties through the medium of the People's Front, the bourgeois democrats, however, would have found it impossible to carry out their mission.

### IV.

**By joining with the republican bourgeoisie in a People's Front, the Socialist and Communist parties objectively lined up on the side of the bourgeoisie.**

The price of the bourgeoisie for making paper declarations against Fascism is that the workers surrender every slogan really capable of defeating fascism, that they accept the program of the bourgeoisie. In the People's Front, the working class parties regardless of their subjective intentions, became the instrument by which the capitalist class has checked the revolutionary movement, thereby maintaining itself in power.

The whole history of the People's Front in Spain has been one of the bolstering up of the bourgeoisie, the expulsion of peasants from the land, attacks on workers' organizations, maintenance of colonial oppression, the protection of the reactionary officers' caste.

In the face of the revolutionary wave unleashed by the workers against the fascist counter-revolution, the bourgeois ministers found themselves without the power to govern. They negotiated frantically with the reformist labor leaders to enter the cabinet and pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Caballero, after holding out for months against the People's Front tendency, finally capitulated to the bourgeoisie and entered the government.

In the face of a situation wherein the interests of the proletariat required the organization of more workers committees, their centralization and increased power, centralized control of the Red Army by the Central Workers Committees, Caballero, because of his bourgeois alliances necessarily abandoned a revolutionary program, and used his prestige as a Socialist to dissolve the dual power of the workers' committees and their influence over the armed forces, and to restore the shattered bourgeois state machinery. He failed to call upon the peasants to seize the land and refuses to grant freedom to Morocco. The Caballero Government calls upon the proletarian to submerge their political differences with the bourgeoisie, that is, to subordinate itself to the program of the bourgeoisie.

Caballero calls for the proletariat to swim against the fascist current but at the same time ties the dead weight of the People's Front around its neck.

The Caballero Government is a bourgeois-coalition government. The seats held by workers' parties do not change its character. Rather, this fact points to the non-revolutionary character of the workers' parties.

The Catalonian government, in which not only the Socialists and Communists but also the POUM and the anarcho-syndicalists participated, was even more of a hollow shell than the Madrid government. All the essential functions of the State had been taken over by the workers' committees, making the government merely a rubber stamp. Here also, the left-republican petty-bourgeois parties, including the more "left" party of Companys, showed that their role was to destroy the dual power of the workers and keep them within the narrow confines of bourgeois democracy.

## V.

**To defeat fascism the proletariat needs a revolutionary program.**

The keystone of such a program is the fact that the Socialist revolution is on the order of the day in Spain at the present time. The alternative is clearly nothing less than Socialism or Fascism, not the defense of bourgeois democracy.

From this basic plank flows a series of demands which are not only necessary to bring about the transition to socialism, but are also important with respect to mobilizing the masses for the immediate military victory over the fascists.

Land to the peasants, confiscation of the landed estates and their control by peasant committees—this is essential to mobilize the greatest masses behind the proletariat and to disintegrate the peasant sections of the fascist armies.

Freedom of Morocco. This slogan is elementary. It can drive a wedge between Franco and the Moors and make the latter what they rightfully should be—allies of the workers.

For workers' control of production. Employers, government agents or supervisory personnel may try to use their position to sabotage production against the interests of the masses and for reactionary purposes. To prevent this, the workers in every factory must through their committees establish contact over all phases of production (examine the books of each establishment, check up on prices, speed of production, etc.). This control will enable the workers when the time is ripe to pass over more easily to ownership and operation of industry by a government of workers, peasants and militiamen.

For the organization of workers' councils, centralization of these on a national and regional scale as the basis for the new workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Centralized control of the army by the workers' councils. All power to the workers, peasants and soldiers committees. Only the realization of these slogans can make possible the transition to socialism which alone can avert a second civil war. Without the realization of these slogans there is the everpresent danger of the re-solidification of the bourgeois state apparatus, and of a compromise with the fascists.

But none of these slogans can be raised without a break with the bourgeoisie whose existence they threaten. The first step toward a revolutionary program must therefore be a complete break with the bourgeoisie.

## VI.

**The success of the Spanish revolution demands a revolutionary Socialist party!**

None of the Spanish parties can at the present time be regarded as that party, or as capable of leading the working class to the seizure of power.

The Communist party, in line with the decisions of the 7th Congres of the Comintern, has become the most outspoken exponent of reformism. It champions the defense of bourgeois democracy as against the Socialist revolution, and everywhere, in Madrid and Barcelona, has acted to curb all tendencies toward the seizure of power by the working class. Its leaders heatedly insist that they are not guilty of any intentions of seeking a workers' state even after the military struggle with fascism is over.

The Caballero wing of the Socialist party, which prior to February gave promise of the adoption of a revolutionary policy, has taken the road of People's-Frontism, participation in the coalition government and the defense of bourgeois democracy. It is moreover a grave indictment against Caballero that he supported the merger of the Socialist Youth the Young Communist League, with

the result that the previous leftward development of the Young Socialists has been checked by the general Stalinist cast of the united organization. The Prieto wing of the SP has long been the representative of traditional reformist and opportunist policies; indeed, it is the practical line of this tendency which is in effect being carried thru by Caballero today. But in spite of the desertion of Caballero, there are significant left-wing forces in the Socialist party and in the Youth which represent the future of revolutionary socialism.

Neither the POUM nor the anarcho-syndicalists have consistently fought the policies of People's-Frontism, or consistently carried through the policy of building the dual power of the workers in opposition to the "official" government. The POUM, however, has continued to maintain that the issue is Socialism versus Fascism, not the preservation of democracy, and its general revolutionary program is in contrast with the vague and chaotic "program" of the anarcho-syndicalists; its expulsion from the Catalonian government—at the demand of the CP—affords it the possibility of making a turn in the direction of revolutionary Marxism. But this will happen only if the POUM learns the lessons of its recent experiences.

The workers cannot automatically find the road to revolutionary Socialism. The foundering of all the parties of the working class in the mire of reformism proves that without the leadership of the party firmly grounded in revolutionary Marxism, the proletariat is doomed to failure.

Only when such a party tears away the workers from collaboration with the bourgeoisie and establishes itself as the leader of the Spanish workers can Fascism be permanently defeated and a proletarian government established.

The forces for such a party are present in Spain today, first and foremost in the left wing of the Socialist party and in the Socialist youth, as well as the POUM. In addition, sections of the anarcho-syndicalists and the CP can be won over. And the militancy of the Spanish workers and peasants attests to the mass forces that are available for the building of such a revolutionary Socialist party.

## VII.

**The Spanish revolution needs for its success the support of the international working class.**

The struggle in Spain has already taken on the character of an international civil war. French, German, Italian, Belgian workers fight side by side with their Spanish brothers against the armies of fascism. The major parties of the LSI have surrounded the fighting Spanish workers with a blockade against the shipment of arms. The parties of the Third International lead the workers to rely upon pressure on the democratic bourgeois governments to break the neutrality blockade of Spain. The Soviet Union has only at the very last second, when the fascists are knocking at the very doors of Madrid, sent arms to the Spanish workers.

But the international working class can and must give effective aid to the Spanish workers. Independent working class aid for the Spanish revolution!

Our Socialist party and YPSL must take immediate steps to mobilize the widest support possible for all types of such aid. We must act as the initiating and organizing force of a great mass movement to prevent American recognition of the Franco regime and to oppose the "neutrality" policy of the Roosevelt administration. We must participate in and initiate wide united front actions for the purpose of collecting food, clothing, medical supplies, etc., to the Spanish workers. Above all, we must heed the insistent cry of our Spanish comrades that their most pressing need is not for food or medical supplies,

but for arms, munitions, machine guns, airplanes. The progressives and liberals who "support Spanish democracy" will draw the line here; it devolves upon us to carry on the campaign for arms to the Spanish workers. We likewise endorse the action of our party in helping, on a national scale, the sending of trained men to Spain to join the International Brigade, in particular the or-

ganization of the Debs Column. All of these concrete and practical forms of aid must be linked up with a simultaneous campaign of education and propaganda on the Spanish Civil War and the issue of Socialism versus Fascism which is being fought out, in order to mobilize working class and progressive sentiments behind these slogans and actions.

## Draft Resolution on Revolutionary Class Struggle vs. the People's Front

1. THE ITALIAN invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the French General Strike of June, 1936, the present Civil War in Spain, the events in China, the unparalleled armament programs of all the great powers, make clear that a new stage in the general decline of capitalism has begun. This stage is a new period of wars and revolutions, on an international scale.

2. In the intensified crisis of this period, the sole solution which can serve the interests of the proletariat and of the great masses of the people generally is the conquest of political power by the working class, and the utilization of this power for the achievement of socialism.

3. Power can be won by the working class only thru the methods of independent class struggle, in uncompromising opposition at every phase of the developing crisis to the bourgeoisie and to the bourgeois state in whatever form.

4. Likewise, the bulk of the non-proletarian masses can be won to the side of the working class and of socialism only if the working class itself shows decisive leadership by pursuing the methods of independent, revolutionary class struggle.

5. Within the labor movement, the greatest obstacle to independent class struggle is the methods and ideology of class-collaboration. At the present time this ideology is advanced primarily under the slogans of the People's Front.

6. The slogans of the People's Front were advanced first by the Communist International and its sections, receiving theoretical expression at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International during the summer of 1935. They have rapidly been accepted and propagated by the reformist parties, and by many liberal parties as well, throughout the world. These slogans, though new in form, are old in content: representing merely the classic policies and methods of class collaboration, and of its crucial expression—coalition government, as applied to the present international situation.

7. The People's Front, like all forms of class collaboration, is the renunciation of the independent class struggle of the workers. Thru the People's Front, the working class abandons its own program—for power and for socialism, and accepts the program of the "democratic" bourgeoisie: i.e., accepts the program of the defense of the **status quo**. Indeed as Blum himself has openly expressed it, the People's Front proposes to "rehabilitate" capitalism.

8. The People's Front has nothing in common with the United Front. The United Front, a chief means of proletarian struggle, involves only agreement on specific actions, and excludes any question of the sacrifice of program or principle or any other form of the abandonment of political independence on the part of the working class and its revolutionary party. The revolutionary party in the United Front, maintains intact its program for independent revolutionary class struggle, for worker's power and for socialism. As a primary tactic for in-

volving the broadest masses in progressive struggle, revolutionary Marxism proposes, in contradistinction to the People's Front, the United Front of action.

9. The policy of the People's Front cannot offer any adequate defense against Fascism since Fascism follows in every country as an inevitable stage, in the decline of capitalism, unless capitalism itself is overthrown. Consequently any policy short of the revolutionary policy for the overthrow of the entire capitalist order, not merely is powerless against Fascism, but in fact makes certain the victory of Fascism.

10. The People's Front is unable to mobilize the bulk of the middle classes under the leadership of the working class—without which the victory of the workers is impossible. Indeed, since in the People's Front the working class abandons its own independent program and independent leadership, the policy of the People's Front leaves the middle classes easy prey to the bold demagogic of the Fascists, and thus permits Fascism to provide itself with a mass base that is essential to its rise to power.

11. In the day-by-day struggles of the trade unions, the class-collaborationist policy of the People's Front hinders and blocks the militant struggle for immediate demands, and the sharpening of class consciousness thru this struggle, in favor of bureaucratic and "legal" methods, and especially tends to rely more and more upon the institutions of the bourgeois state-government arbitrators, labor administrators, boards of review, and courts.

12. Coalition governments, an integral part of the policy of the People's Front, can under no circumstances serve the interests of the working class. A People's Front government like any kind of a coalition government, is a form of the bourgeois state. The state is the chief executive of the ruling class. By entering into a capitalist government, under any conditions whatever, the working-class parties become the political administrators for the bourgeoisie, for capitalism. As such, their acts necessarily prevent, and in the crucial moments actively suppress, the revolutionary struggle for workers' power and for socialism, which can be prosecuted only by uncompromising struggle against every form of the capitalist state.

13. The lessons of history and experience demonstrate no less conclusively than theory the utter bankruptcy and anti-revolutionary character of the policies of class collaboration, and coalition government, whether called by the name of People's Front or any other. Thruout the history of the labor movement, these policies have resulted only in defeat and disaster for the working class. It was they that led to the capitulation to the imperialist war in 1914; it was they that led to the defeat of the two post-war revolutions in Germany, during which social-democratic administration of the capitalist state was carried to its logical conclusion in the execution of the revolutionary leaders. The policy of the Communist International in China identical with the present day Popular-Frontism, by subordinating the revolutionary workers

and peasants to Chiang Kai Shek and the Kuo-Min-Tang, led in 1927 to the defeat of the Chinese revolution, and the mass executions of the revolutionary Chinese workers. The class-collaborationism of the German Social-Democracy shares with the leftist sectarianism of the German Communist party political responsibility for the victory of Hitler in 1933.

14. The crucial historical example of a People's Front government was the provisional government of Kerensky in Russia in 1917, in which parties representing workers and peasants participated, with the exception of the revolutionary party—the Bolshevik party. The Russian Revolution succeeded, and could have succeeded, only in independence of and in the last analysis, in direct conflict with the Provisional Government, since the Provisional Government, like any coalition government, administered the interests of the bourgeoisie, and could not serve the interests of the proletariat. The workers of Russia took power in November thru the overthrow of the Provisional Government.

#### *People's Front in France*

15. Class collaboration and coalitionism, newly dressed up in the slogans of the People's Front, have already received their decisive historical tests. In France, the People's Front has tied the workers thru the Socialist and Communist parties to the Radical Socialist party; and thru the Radical Socialist party to French imperialism. France is today in the midst of a developing revolutionary crisis. The policy of the People's Front has prevented the French workers from consolidating their independent class strength, from creating their own armed militia, from forming their own class committees and councils, from preparing their own ranks for the seizure of power. The policy of the People's Front has enabled the Fascists to continue virtually unhampered their preparations in gathering arms and likewise in extending their ideas into the middle classes. It has diverted the energies of the workers from the road of revolutionary class struggle into reliance upon the bourgeois state. Blum by accepting leadership of the coalition People's Front government became thereby the chief executive for French imperialism. The iron logic of his position, supported by both the Socialist and Communist parties, brings more and more clearly to light the role of the People's Front government. The government sends its police and troops against striking French workers; it suppresses issues of revolutionary journals; it passes laws establishing compulsory arbitration of labor disputes; it boycotts aid and volunteers for the Spanish workers; it puts down by force uprisings of the Syrian masses, and tortures revolutionists in French Indo-China; it maintains as governor in French Morocco one of the most notorious of French reactionaries; it assumes redoubled leadership in the armament program of French capitalism; it prepares on every front to wage international war in the interests of French imperialism. The general hesitation and weakness of the French People's Front Government is in instructive contrast to the vigor with which it acted in January when it felt that French Morocco—perhaps the most significant of the colonies of French imperialism—was threatened.

16. The events in France show with pitiless clarity the real meaning of the People's Front in the present crisis. The People's Front, far from being in any sense a positive form of proletarian struggle, is in actuality a means of preparation for the coming imperialist war. The People's Front lays the basis within the bourgeois-democratic nations for the "national front," for national unity; that is, for unity of all classes under the bourgeois government for the support of the imperialist war. This has been made absolutely apparent in France by the call of Thorez, the leader of the Communist party of France, for

a "French Front" to replace the People's Front; and by the open chauvinism of both the Socialist and Communist parties, with their calls for the "unity of the French nation" against the "encroachments" of Germany. It is this fact, indeed, which explains why the slogans of the People's Front were first put forward by the Communist International. The Soviet foreign office, which controls in all respects the policy of the Communist International, searching for allies in the coming war, offers the bourgeois-democratic powers a guarantee against revolution, thru the anti-revolutionary policy of the People's Front, if these powers will consent to a military alliance with the Soviet Union, or to neutrality in the coming war.

#### *Popular Front in Spain*

17. In Spain the policy of the People's Front has been as disastrous as in France. Thru the People's Front electoral pact signed in 1935, the Spanish workers were turned aside from revolutionary struggle. The People's Front government which took power in Feb. 1936, was in the face of the profound social crisis, unable to take any serious steps in the interests of the workers. On the contrary, though supported by all existing parties of the workers, it found itself soon forced to send police against peasants who had taken over the land, and against striking workers, to censor the working class journals, and to forestall all attempts to arm the workers and peasants. Meanwhile the reaction prepared its forces, gathered arms, and worked out its strategy unhampered by the government. When the reaction struck, in July, the first attempt of the government was—to reach a compromise. Only the threats of the masses on the streets prevented the government from capitulating and compelled the arming of the people. The magnificent resistance of the workers and peasants has been at all stages hindered, even from a military point of view, but above all politically, by the People's Front government. The Spanish crisis can be solved in the interests of the masses only if they take power thru their own independent committees and councils, establishing their own revolutionary path toward socialism. The People's Front government is a bourgeois government. The acceptance of the premiership by Caballero, the entrance into the Government of the Socialists, Communists and Anarchists, has shunted aside the building of independent working class strength, and restricts the struggle to the vain, and from the point of view of the working class in any case, useless task of defending "democratic" capitalism against Fascist capitalism. Equally in Catalonia, where the revolutionary situation was far more advanced than in the rest of Spain, the participation of the working class parties in the People's Front government—that is to say—in a bourgeois government—has restrained and blocked the revolutionary advance of the working class, and makes impossible defense against the counter-revolution. Even the POUM, though correctly defining the struggle in Spain as "Capitalism vs. Socialism," against the slogan of "Democracy vs. Fascism" advanced by Caballero and the Communists, violated its words in practice by participation in the Catalonian People's Front government, and thereby contributed to the blocking of the Spanish revolution. Chief responsibility for the fatal People's Front policy in Spain must be assigned to the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union; first, because of the political line of the Communist Party in Spain in championing the People's Front, for which policy the Communists have succeeded in winning Caballero and the majority of the Socialists; and second, because the whole weight of the Soviet Government has been thrown back of this policy—that is, has been brought to bear to prevent the development of the Spanish revolution, going to such lengths as to demand the ousting of the POUM from the Catalonian Government and its actual suppression as the price of continued

material aid from the Soviet Union. As in France, so in Spain. The Spanish workers can avoid defeat, can achieve victory, only by breaking in its entirety with the policy of the People's Front, only by taking the road of independent revolutionary class struggle for power and for socialism.

18. The United States is not in a stage of developing revolutionary crisis, as France, nor in the midst of a Civil War, as Spain. Nevertheless, the class collaborationist policy of the People's Front is no less disastrous to the advance of the workers in this country than in France or Spain or any other nation. This policy of the People's Front here as elsewhere, is a renunciation of the class struggle, a proposal for retreat and capitulation, ensuring the victory of Fascism and preparing support of the coming war. As put forward under the guidance of the C.P., the policy of the People's Front has led to indirect support of Roosevelt at the last election, to evasion and collaborationism and hampering of militant class action on the trade union and unemployed fields; to propagandizing for the idea of a classless Populist "Farmer-Labor party," which would prove one more chain binding the workers to capitalism; to efforts to liquidate any independent revolutionary youth movement into an amorphous classless youth organization; to pacifist and social-patriotic Leagues and Congresses preparing a mass base for support of the U. S. government in the coming

war. Here as everywhere, the advance of the working class can be achieved only by a resolute break with the policy, methods, slogans and activities of the People's Front; and a relentless prosecution of the independent class struggle against the class enemy and the bourgeois state.

19. In the face of the international crisis, in this new period of wars and revolutions, during which in all probability the fate of all mankind hangs in the balance, the Socialist party of the U. S. declares its unalterable opposition to all forms of class collaborationism and coalition government, and thus to the policy and methods, the theory and practise of the People's Front. As the major tactic for building the revolutionary unity of the workers, as well as drawing the non-proletarian masses to the side of the worker's struggle, it opposes to the People's Front the United Front of Action. It reaffirms its declaration that the world now faces the single alternative of Capitalism or Socialism, rejecting all together the conception that the historical issue is between Democracy and Fascism. It declares that the victory of Socialism will be achieved only by the independent revolutionary class struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state, only by the abolition of the capitalist state and the entire capitalist order, by the building of a worker's state, and thru worker's power the construction of a world socialist society.

## TOWARD SOCIALIST CLARITY

ALBERT GOLDMAN

### BIGGER AND BETTER "CONFESSIONS"

**A**MIDST the jeering laughter of the reactionaries who with great satisfaction point to the "trial" in Moscow as conclusive evidence that Russia is a mad house; amidst the shrieks of the Stalinist bureaucrats wallowing in a filthy ocean of lies; amidst the shocked bewilderment of millions of workers and thousands of liberals; amidst the valiant struggle of the revolutionary workers and independent intellectuals to bring out the true character of the greatest frame-up in history, the frightful and sickening spectacle staged by Stalin is about to conclude its second cycle, as this is written. The second batch of miserable human beings who once were Bolsheviks, leaders in the greatest uprising of history, will slink off the stage, beaten and transformed into degraded wretches by a monstrous usurper who designates himself as a "disciple of Lenin."

There will in all probability be an article on the "trial" of Radek and the others in the next issue of the AP-EAL, analyzing the evidence and "confessions." In the meantime it is necessary to point out:

1. The "trials" are serious blows to the revolutionary movement. How many thousands of sympathizers of the revolutionary movement, if not participants in it, have been estranged from it because of these trials, is impossible to estimate. What kind of a movement is it that has brought into being men so unscrupulous as to plot with the Gestapo for the overthrow of the Soviet government, the government which they themselves did so much to create? Or, if the charges are not true, what kind of a movement is it that places at the head of the first working-class state a tyrant who stops at nothing to get rid of opposition? It would be folly for us to expect that the sympathizers of the Marxist movement are all Marxists. Our own small revolutionary movement

has no doubt gained converts as a result of the frame-up. But Stalin's attack on us is an attack on the revolutionary movement and it will take some time for the revolutionary socialist movement to recover from the blow.

2. Stalin is achieving one of his objectives. His aim to discredit revolutionary Marxism by discrediting the greatest living exponent of Marxist ideas could not possibly succeed. In that he has failed and of course with the passing of time it will become clear even to some of Stalin's followers that the charges against Trotsky were meant only to confuse and betray the working class. One of Stalin's objectives however, is to assure the leaders of the capitalist states, with whom he wants a military alliance, that there is no danger that the "Old Bolsheviks" with their ideas of world revolution have the slightest chance to get back to power and upset the apple cart. In that he has certainly succeeded. If the capitalist politicians had any doubts about Stalin's sincerity and determination to defend the status quo, those doubts have disappeared.

3. The necessity for an international commission of inquiry to take the testimony of Trotsky and his son and to demand that Stalin produce his evidence before an impartial tribunal is a political question of the greatest importance. It is a means to defend the integrity of the revolutionary idea and not simply to defend a great personality. The revolutionary movement must be guarded against usurpers and hypocrites who are undermining the morale of the whole movement.

### TWO RESOLUTIONS ON PEOPLE'S FRONT

**T**WO purposes must be kept in mind in formulating a resolution on an important theoretical or tactical problem. In the first place it must serve as a guide for the party in its important activities; it must orient the party in a certain direction. In the second place it should

educate the membership of the party and the advanced workers to see clearly the problem tackled by the resolution and the solution that it proposes.

Frequently one hears the complaint that a resolution is too long or written in Marxian language; the workers will not read or if they do will not understand it. That shows a complete misconception of the nature and purpose of a resolution. It is not a document which is to be spread widely amongst the masses. It is not a propaganda document but it is material for correct propaganda. It is to serve as a key for the members of the party in the sense that it should furnish them with the basic ideas for correct revolutionary agitation. It must include everything of importance with reference to the subject it deals with and while brevity is to be preferred it should not be achieved at the expense of clarity. Wonderful indeed would it be if our theoreticians were literary masters. It would increase its effectiveness a thousand times if a correct theoretical resolution were brilliantly written. But first of all we must aspire for correctness.

When a resolution deals with a current problem it invariably arises out of a previous controversy with reference to some tactic followed by some political or economic group in the working class. In such a case, to be effective both from the point of view of its serving as a guide for the party and of its educational value for the membership it is essential that it mention names and deal with specific instances where the theory of the resolution has been violated. Stated merely in an abstract form, even though correctly, it loses most of its value.

The difference between a resolution that is formally correct and a resolution that, aside from stating a correct theoretical position, also points out how that position was violated in specific instances and the effects of that violation is well illustrated by a comparison of the resolution on the People's Front published in the Jan. 2nd edition of the SOCIALIST CALL and the one published in this issue of the APPEAL.

For our party as well as for every working-class party throughout the world the question of the people's front surpasses in importance all other questions. It is actually the main problem confronting the revolutionary movement because every other problem is solved in the light of the position taken on this key question. Whether it be the struggle against war and fascism or the question

of a Farmer-Labor party our attitude will depend on what position we take on the people's front. If for no other reason than the fact that the Communist and Socialist parties of France and Spain have become champions of the people's front idea, is it necessary that every grouping in the party be compelled to take a position on that question.

The resolution in the CALL correctly opposes the class struggle against the People's Front. By its insistence on the class struggle it places itself in the category of a left wing resolution. But it is not enough simply to state that we stand for the class struggle. At a time when the Communists are all howling for the People's Front; at a time when Socialists, so-called, are heading Popular Front Governments, it is impermissible simply to state a correct general proposition. Not a word in the CALL resolution on Blum, on Caballero, on the effects of actual People's Fronts in practice. Point fingers, name names, comrades. How else can you make sure that our members will understand exactly what you mean; how else assure that not mere lip service be given to a vague idea? Every main idea of the resolution is correct but taken altogether the resolution is not correct for the simple reason that our theories must be dragged down to earth so to speak.

No one reading the APPEAL resolution on the People's Front, published in this issue, can fail to understand what is meant by the People's Front. It is only a draft of course and I do not think that is is perfect. In my opinion it should contain a paragraph making clear that we are in favor of a struggle for the democratic rights of the workers under capitalism; and what is more important, based on the proposition I stated above, it should contain an analysis of the situation in the Wisconsin section of our party. If Wisconsin is following the tactic of the People's Front we must say so in our resolution.

It would appear to me that no difficulty at all should be encountered in the attempt to formulate a common resolution on the People's Front. That should be the central resolution of the convention; at least the left wingers should attempt to make it so. The left wing must smoke out the People's Fronters and a serious ideological struggle must be initiated against them.

In my judgment whatever ideas are found in the CALL resolution which the APPEAL resolution does not contain should be embodied in the latter and the left wing unite on one resolution.

## Call for Socialist Appeal Institute

### February 20-21, Chicago, Ill.

THE FAILURE of plans set into motion for the holding of a general united national left wing conference makes it necessary for the Socialist Appeal Association of Chicago to take the initiative in the calling of a gathering where revolutionary Socialists will be able, prior to the convention, to discuss the problems and perspectives confronting the left wing and the party. The reasons for that failure are explained in the lead editorial in this issue. Whatever they may be and whoever may be to blame, the fact remains that it is impossible to permit a situation where left wingers keep silent about their attitude to the convention and to the future of our party. A discussion on resolutions to be presented by left wingers at the convention is imperative and since no national left wing conference could be arranged the Appeal Association must assume the task of conducting such a discussion.

We are still hopeful that before the convention it will be possible to hold a united left wing conference. If that proves to be impossible the Appeal Institute will surely lay the basis for friendly co-operation between the genuine left wing forces in the party.

All Appeal groups and all left wingers anxious and determined to transform the party into the revolutionary instrument of the American working class are invited and urged to attend the Institute. We realize that there are many difficulties which will confront the comrades who are anxious to come to the Institute and participate in the discussion. But every effort should be made to overcome the obstacles. Communicate immediately with

ALBERT GLOTZER  
c/o Socialist Appeal  
Room 719—35 S. Dearborn St.  
Chicago, Ill.

# APPEAL NOTES

## EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS DEALING WITH THE APPEAL PLATFORM

Note: Unfortunately there is no space for the publication of the complete letters. We hope that in the next inner-party issue there will be room to print the critical comments sent in.

\* \* \* \*

From JOHN HALL, Lynn, Mass.

I was very much impressed and pleased with it and I want to let you know that my name can be used in connection with it.

From FRANK CECLELLAND, Webster Groves, Mo.

The necessity of a national left wing in the Socialist party as the basis of a genuine revolutionary movement is the greatest task of our membership. To my mind the platform..... is the most heartening opening toward this end that has appeared. I support its position.

From HERBERT S. KIMMEL, Sullivan, Ind.

In my estimation the Road Ahead is the most complete analysis of the weakness in the present trend in the party. I endorse it in its entirety and hope that all revolutionary thinking Socialists will do likewise.

From B. J. WIDICK, Akron, Ohio.

The program of action published in the Dec. 15th issue of the APPEAL meets with my hearty endorsement. You can depend upon my full and unqualified support since the future of the party rests on the adoption of those policies advocated in the program.

From E. V. HANKINS, Hammond, Ind.

Sir: I cannot say comrade for I do not feel that any comrade would make such statements as appear in an issue of SOCIALIST APPEAL dated Dec. 15th . . . . I say right here that I cannot endorse such a Trotskyite program as that offered by the young half-baked left wingers of the party.

## GEMS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION FROM L'HUMANITE! (French C. P. Paper)

Dec. 19, 1936

**Long Live the Republican Army!**

"Does M. Daladier believe he will raise the morale of the army by forbidding the circulation of l'HUMANITE? On the contrary, we think that it is only the People's Front program which can unite the army, which will weld together the officers, sub-officers and the soldiers to the same duty of defense of the Republic and transform the army into a true national and republican army."

\* \* \* \*

Dec. 24, 1936:      **But business is business!**

"The Fascist paper, CHOC, states that: "The communists are looking forward to a putsch in Paris during the holiday period!"

"It (CHOC) has already announced that next Saturday will be the "great day!"

"It (CHOC) is inciting the people to flee during X-mas and New Years."

"What does Parisian business think of these abominable manuevers?"

## AN APOLOGY

**I**N THE APPEAL platform there was a derogatory reference to the character of the SOCIALIST CALL. It should have been made plain that the reference was to the CALL as published during the campaign. Every revolutionary Socialist recognizes the tremendous improvement in the CALL since the right wing Militants have left it. We do not mean to say that the CALL is a completely revolutionary paper. All public organs in our party are handicapped by the fact that the policies of the party are not consistent with revolutionary Marxism and many things that ought to be said cannot be said in a public organ. The CALL is under a greater handicap because it is looked upon more or less as the official organ of the party. Consequently the editors of the CALL have to be more careful than editors of other papers. At least we hope that this explanation for the occasional centrist tendencies in the CALL is the correct one.

## FOR OUR WESTERN ORGAN

**F**RANK STERN, business manager of LABOR ACTION, writes that the newest addition to the roster of revolutionary socialist papers is going like a house afire. But—and you should know what is coming—financial difficulties are interfering with the progress of LABOR ACTION. His appeal for financial help should be heeded by every Socialist interested in the building of a revolutionary movement on the west coast. LABOR ACTION has exceeded all expectations and support for it is a duty.

### JOIN SOCIALIST APPEAL ASSOCIATION

To support the Socialist Appeal in its task of educating the membership of the Socialist party in the principles of revolutionary socialism.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

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